

The Pileup

The Newsletter of the Carolina DX Association

January 1994

CDXA Officers

| | |
|-------|---------------|
| WD4R | Joe Simpkins |
| AA4SC | Rick Porter |
| W4UNP | Bill Jennings |
| WZ3Q | Don Daso |
| AG4L | Bruce Gragg |

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| Vice-President |
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The President's Column

Here's hoping this edition of the pileup finds everyone well and prospering in 1994. I'm sure Santa brought you some neat goodies. He forgot to leave that new Alpha at my house; I'm sure he'll make up this oversight next year. The beginning of this year has brought with it some challenges and some good DX. The offending repeater on Flat Top in Asheville should be moving soon, but not before causing significant interference to many of our CDXA members. Thanks to Bill, KD4IL, for his efforts in communicating and representing CDXA in this matter. Please keep Bill informed of anything you think might be helpful in this regard.

The frigid temperatures and other weather related events seem to have brought out noise problems around our area. If you're experiencing a problem at your QTH and are served by Duke Power, help is just a phone call away. Call Duke's main number and inform them of your problem.. Try to have localized or identified the source of the problem as best you can before calling. (Always check within your home for an offending appliance or other electrical device first. An ordinary AM radio tuned slightly off-frequency will help in "sniffing out" the noise source. A more scientific device should be available from CDXA soon.) *Also see W3AZ's article in September 1992 QST.*

Dues are due. Once again, PacketCluster users pay \$30.00 and non-Packet members pay \$15.00 per year. Send dues to W4UNP--Bill Jennings 630 Whitepine Drive Catawba SC 29704.

We plan to continue upgrading PacketCluster in 1994. Our current plans are to install a digipeater at the Carowinds site to aid user-connects to the KD4IL node. Other improvements will follow as we can fund and arrange them. Remember: spring IS approaching, bringing with it that favorite activity--hamfests, including our own Charlotte event. I look forward to seeing you in the fleamarkets. And speaking of seeing you, don't forget our next meeting--scheduled for January 28 at the Fish Fare, off I-77 at the Westinghouse exit. The meeting starts at 6:30 PM. Murph, W4WMQ, will present a program on Eritrea. Cost is \$10.50 for the meal, which has been arranged by Ric, AA4SC. And don't forget our weekly luncheon get-togethers each Wednesday at Shoney's--440 Independence at Midtown Square. They're a great way to catch a bite and catch up on some ham news and CDXA activities at the same time. See you there and on the 28th!

73 de Joe WD4R

Carolina DX Association PacketCluster

KD4IL 145.09

N4ZC 144.93

Salisbury area digipeater: DXSAL

Hickory area digipeater: HKYDX

CDXA Net Boone repeater--147.36 each Wednesday 8:30 local AG4L NCS

EDITORIAL

Thanks for the votes of confidence in the recent election. I'm looking forward to providing you with a quality *Newsletter*.

For those of you who may not remember or know me from my earlier tenure here in the Charlotte area, here's some biographical data:

I've been licensed since 1963, from Novice to WA8MAZ in Ohio. My first ticket came during the Novice Roundup, so my first QSOs were contest QSOs--something I've never gotten over! After college in Ohio and New Mexico, then back to Ohio again, I've lived and operated (following film/tv work) all over the country, from W8 to WØ to W2 to W4 and then up to W3, and now back to 4-land. I must say I enjoyed the East Coast advantages from NY and MD, but much prefer the weather here. I'm married to a Charlotte native, and she told me the lifestyle here in the South was slower and more relaxed, and I'm finding that to be true.

Contests remain my first love in our hobby, although I've been known to chase DX (have worked all the current countries), build gear, collect awards, and write about our hobby for *CQ* and *QST*. Remember that early contest exposure? Well, the interest's still there, and I try to feed it whenever I can. That interest grew exponentially with five years of Potomac Valley Radio Club membership (including one year as President) in Washington, DC, and I plan to continue contesting here in the Carolinas. I hope to continue the repair and rebuild of N4ZC that Roger and I began this fall, and get back into contesting seriously once again. (This is an early pitch--we want to return to those thrilling days of yesteryear--when N4ZC was a contender in the multi-single category.) And I hope to get up a small tower here in our tiny backyard to keep my hand in, along with some local PacketCluster activity.

I hope each and every member feels comfortable making suggestions about *The Pileup*. I would appreciate your ideas on directions it should or could take.

Along with becoming a monthly publication, I want to include the following "columns" in each *Newsletter*, with your help: Editorial; Member Profile; Tech Tips; PacketCluster News; DXAC News (when appropriate); Upcoming Events; and a President's Column. Any other suggestions or ideas would, of course, be welcome.

vy 73 de Don WZ3Q

In the Shack

Forgetting the philosophical debate over advantages or disadvantages of Packet for a moment, many of you have perhaps asked, "What's the bottom line--what's the biggest benefit I can get from the Cluster?" Foregoing the argument Packet contributes no operating skills to our hobby for a moment, what happened on the Cluster in 1993? What was possible, in other words?

If you had worked all the countries announced on the Cluster in 1993, your DXCC total would stand at a healthy 298. Here's the breakdown:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 160--159 | <i>I can't believe that many countries were on 160!</i> |
| 80--236 | <i>You gotta get something good up on 80.</i> |
| 40--273 | <i>Especially for those with Extra class tickets!</i> |
| 30--231 | <i>Those WARC bands attract their fair share of DX.</i> |
| 20--291 | <i>There's no meters like 20 meters.</i> |
| 17--264 | <i>Obviously popular for propagation reasons.</i> |
| 15--283 | <i>If 20's too busy for you, try 15.</i> |
| 12--221 | <i>200 countries are good on any band.</i> |
| 10--235 | <i>And you thought 10 was dead?</i> |

Extremely interesting numbers, aren't they? If contesting, & the ability to work lots & lots of countries during a single weekend doesn't get your interest, then the opportunities presented by PacketCluster just might. The concept of having access to multiple bands at once is a big change from the early days of DXing- - when the lone op spent hours just listening, scanning the bands for the elusive contact, working it in isolation, waiting for cards to come. Then came the stories of the chase. A far cry from today's seemingly nearly instant access to all our bands.

Tech Tips

news and views

By now, probably everyone has heard or read about this product, but if not...read on. Caig Laboratories (16744 West Bernardo Drive San Diego CA 92127) makes several extremely interesting chemical products. The two of most interest to hams are Cramolin and ProGold--chemicals which clean, protect and lubricate electrical connections. These products really do what the manufacturer claims: improve conductivity; reduce RFI and intermittent signals; reduce wear and abrasion; and maintain the best signal quality. (I first used Cramolin spray a few years ago to solve that typical 15-meter intermittent on my TS-830S bandswitch, which all other chemicals had failed to solve. The problem has not returned. I continue to use it on all critical connections in my profession--on audio and video cables.) Write for literature. You won't be disappointed with this company's products!

There's lots of talk on .18 about vertical antennas these days. With Jim, KF4HK taking the reins of COMTEK ANTENNAS and manufacturing switchboxes for phased arrays, with KØSD and WA4UUP already using four-squares, and K4MQG about to put one up, you can hear some interesting technical and DX-based chatter about these arrays on 2 meters.

(I hope to include a "profile" in each CDXA Newsletter. This will allow each of us a little better glimpse into the personality we talk with behind the keyboard or the 2M microphone, and provide "access" to those outside PacketCluster or repeater coverage. It's also intended to encourage some things: like increased attendance at gatherings; interest in new modes or activities; and provide a higher profile for the club itself.)

MEMBER PROFILE

Ron Bailey AA4S

Ron will be 55 this year. And he's pretty active, as many of you know from hearing his tales of athletic prowess. On the ham front, Ron was licensed in 1963 as WN2HGL in New Jersey, later becoming WA3ATX in West Chester PA. He became N3RB briefly, before moving to Shelby NC and obtaining AA4S in 1978. Ron works as a chemical engineer at FMC, Lithium Division, over in Bessemer City NC.

Ron's early exposure to contesting with the Frankford Radio Club in the PA area continues to influence his present-day hamming. He's contributed single and multi-op scores to all the major hf and vhf contests—either for the CDXA or the SEDXClub over the years.

Lately, Ron's interest has been centered around low band DXing—especially 160, although only needing Zone 23 on 80 for 5B-WAZ is proof Ron does okay there, too. Much of this success can be contributed to his 10 acres criss-crossed with six 550 foot-long beverage antennas. These simple runs of wire work very well, as Ron's success shows. One of Ron's newer interests has been SWLing on the "medium waves" where he has recorded 921 different stations on the AM broadcast band—further proof his antennas really perform. Indeed, Ron journeyed up to CT this summer for the 60th anniversary convention of the National Radio Club. NRC's 700-plus members are specialists in medium wave DXing; their *DX News* magazine is published 30 times a year and is filled with interesting articles.

Ron plans to continue working at FMC through July 1995. He plans to continue contesting, primarily on CW, and wants to log more AM broadcast stations (*that's what he told me!*), continue his baseball and basketball coaching in Shelby's City Park Recreation Department programs, and even play some Industrial League softball when called upon.

In the shack, Ron runs two TS-830S and one IC-765 radios, with DTR-2000, SB-220, Alpha 70A and L4-B amps. Up in the air, he has a Vee at 75 ft for 160 transmitting; a 1/4-wave vertical with elevated radials for 80; a 4-el KLM at 78 ft for 40; a 205BA at 87 ft for 20; a 4-el W2PV design at 60 ft for 15; a 5-el NCJ design at 62 ft for 10. Rounding out the antenna farm are delta loops, rotatable dipoles and so on for the WARC bands and small yagis for SA, and so forth. (Ron's 40/20 tower is a delight—it's a forest ranger style thing you can walk up—made by Upright Scaffolds. It's a real treat to walk up it on a hot summer's day. The breeze at 80 feet is pretty cool, and so's the KLM almost floating in your lap.)

Ron's obviously a talented DXer and contest operator. Just the sort of talent the CDXA needs, supports and benefits from. Give Ron a call the next time you hear him on .18 making his commute to FMC or on Packet. You'll find an interesting ham on the other end.

The Back Page

Meeting Notice

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| WHO? | CDXA |
| WHAT? | MEETING |
| WHEN? | January 28, 1994 6:30 PM FOR SOCIAL HOUR |
| WHERE? | FISH FARE I-77 @ WESTINGHOUSE EXIT |
| WHY? | CAMARADERIE, FOOD & DRINK, & AN ERITREA REPORT FROM W4WMQ |

WANTED

Computer-literate CDXA member to do statistics-style work for this *Newsletter*. We provide raw data--your fingers fly across the keys & come up with simple tables, lists & information which your Editor will use to create fascinating articles. Contact WZ3Q.

Getting through the Pileup

No...this is not a guide to reading the *Newsletter*, rather some thoughts on developing the experience and skills necessary to work the DX station you need. To wit, for some of you, the upcoming 3Y expedition.

The most-needed virtue is patience. Often in short supply when that final country is "just sitting" there, patience is nevertheless a valuable quality. Spend time just *listening!* This is sometimes hard to do, especially with PacketCluster "spots" flashing by, but your obligation (to yourself, to the DX station, and to other ops) is to figure out the DX station's operating system or pattern, then follow it. This technique has worked, continues to work, and will be working well into the future. It requires nothing significant in the way of hardware; it requires *everything* from the operator.

Benefits from following this method multiply quickly. Listening this way will allow you to learn something about propagation, about what works and what doesn't (you'll be amazed at what you can discover), and will make you much more familiar with your radio equipment. You say we're already familiar enough with gear? Okay, then how come so many calls are heard on the wrong frequencies at the wrong time in pileups? Probably because too much time is spent looking at a video screen and too little listening. And then thinking about what's going on--before calling.

Team this process with some hardware (sure hardware helps, but it's not a virtue), and you're halfway home in your quest for success in DX terms.

Good behavior, some true ham spirit and simple human cooperation will go a long way in handling pileups--from either end. Make sure you're doing your part. Good luck and good DX.

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